

# ANAT EBGI

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**Catfish @ Anat Ebgi reviewed**  
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Catfish (2015) Exhibition view.

For an exhibition called Catfish, running at LA's Anat Ebgi from September 11 to October 24, it's only natural that deception would be a key component. Here, we're met with the very literal definition of an internet catfish, someone who creates a false persona to be used on social media websites, in the fictional story at the beginning of the show's press release. It tells of an online romance that wasn't what it seemed. This narrative sets the stage for artists Petra Cortright, Kate Steciw, Letha Wilson and Margo Wolowiec to confront and explore the contemporary availability and ambiguity of the image in the visual internet age.

In the same way that a catfish might compile and re-organize common online imagery and data to create a fake identity, the four artists use this readily available content as primary material, taking it a step further into the realm of sculpture. All of them are working within tactile media and explore this convergence of digital and physical existence uniquely.

Cortright's pieces complement the works of the other artists and are spaced evenly throughout the show, almost pacing and propelling the viewer through the works. While the others explore the hands-on approach of shifting ethereal data into the physical world, the LA-based artist offers movement and a more concept-driven approach to the internet experience that is methodically more "hands-off". With her video piece 'mainbitch', (2012) placed precisely in the middle of the exhibition space, Cortright attempts to illustrate the inability of a visible woman on

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the internet to escape the male gaze. Further driving this point home, the video is displayed on an iPad with a front-facing camera, creating the meta experience of watching someone being watched while being watched yourself.

Steciw's heavily gestural C-print, dibond, and wood framed sculptures exist on the wall as seen in 'Composition 028e' (2015) and as a free-standing wheeled piece entitled 'Composition 028aaa' (2015), asking the viewer to look at, around and through the multi-layered works. Utilizing run-of-the-mill stock photographs, she composes digital collages of different images of the same thing but then abstracts them to the point of unfamiliarity. This re-mixing of banal internet imagery is similarly explored by Wolowiec in her complex textile pieces. Using readily available Instagram content, which she gathers from the geotag feature of the image-sharing app, she digitally distorts the files into aesthetically pleasing composites that are then printed onto various fabrics which she ultimately hand-weaves together.

Meanwhile, Wilson's concrete and unique C-print amalgams force photography from its familiar representational two-dimensional plane into a sculptural existence, where the landscapes that the photographs show are returned once more to their original state as three-dimensional locations. Fraught with imperfections and the unpredictable texture of drying concrete, specifically these imperfections create miniature caves and fault lines across the surface of 'Joshua Tree Concrete Bend' (2015). In 'Kona Lava Black Slash (Steel)' (2015) Wilson has cut a rectangular hole through the face of the work through which the gallery wall is visible, further adding another physical dimension to her photographs. These works accomplish their task of translating digital imagery into a tangible material.

The curatorial choices further enhance the show's concept by mimicking the narrative in the beginning of the press release. We begin with a very formal and recognizable digital collage printed onto silk by Cortright. As we continue through the works of Steciw, Wolowiec and Wilson, formalities become skewed and abstracted. The exhibition ultimately ends on another of Cortright's pieces which takes the form of a large digital painting printed onto anodized aluminum, book-ending it on an abstract note. The contrast between the beginning and end of the show leave the viewer to wonder, "where am I and how did I get here?" It leaves you hanging in the most sensible way possible, it is called *Catfish* after all. \*\*